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Christmas Giving

"Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;"

Christmas and gifts go together, they are inseparable; one can hardly imagine a Christmas without gifts and the Christmas spirit is a spirit of giving. Christmas itself is the memorial of Heaven's great gift to men and it is not strange that the Divine Gift should inspire in humanity a desire to give. To give of one's own to another, to place something bright something good, something that was lacking, something that will bring cheer and happiness into another life, be it in a measure large or small, is there not in this something god-like? Is it not the consciousness that there is in it some likeness to the Divine that makes giving pleasant, satisfactory to the human mind? It is pleasant to think that the world over, at this season, Christmas gifts are bestowing a two fold blessing; blessing alike the recipient and the giver, but there sometimes arises the question as to whether men are getting all of the blessing they might from Christmas gifts and giving; whether or not Christmas giving has degenerated. There are signs abroad that this giving with many has, in a measure at least, become commercialized; that there are many who give, not because they desire the blessedness of giving, not because of the consciousness of God-likeness, not because there is any real pleasure to them in giving, but rather because by giving they hope to get or to gain. Others there are who give from a sense of duty; give because someone has given them or from sense of obligation. This is after all, not Christmas giving, though it may pass as such.

"That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives but a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
That thread of the all sustaining beauty,
Which runs through all and doth all unite,
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a God goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

In order that true Christmas giving may be determined it is necessary to consider the original, Divine gift. God gave to men, for all time a revelation of himself, of his own life made possible and accessible to all human beings. It was, is, the gift of joy, the gift of life at its highest and best. He gave himself! Not food nor clothing, not gold nor precious material of any sort, and yet something that includes all these while it infinitely transcends them. God gave from no sense of duty no great obligation, in the sense in which we use that term, but because he wanted to give, because of an infinite love for those to whom he gave.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Christmas giving, then, has its motive in love; it is inspired by kindly feeling toward those who are to be the receivers of its gifts. Shakespeare voices a truth when he says in Hamlet, "Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind." No gift can neutralize the sting of cruelty and unkindness, in a human life. It may almost be laid down as a maxim, give in love and kindness or give not at all. Not from a sense of duty, not because of any obligation whatsoever, not because of hope for return of gifts, but because of the desire in the heart of the giver, because of good will.

The gift itself may not be, does not need to be, of great value as the world measures values, but the true Christmas gift must carry with it something of the giver. Emerson has expressed this thought in regard to a true gift in these words: "The gift that is true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him". It is worthy of note that it is by his gifts that God binds men to himself.

There is one other important point in regard to the original Christmas gift, to be considered: The gift had its purpose; to touch and brighten and bring the highest and best to those to whom the gift was given. Much of worry and much energy is expended in choosing Christmas gifts, but might not much of this be avoided if this were made the standard by which the choice of the gift is made? Put the loving thought in the selection of the gift, give, by so doing, something of yourself and give not to receive again, give according to that which you have; it may be that a few moments of time spent in writing a letter of Christmas greeting or a single flower with words of cheer will weigh far more in real value than many a costly gift.

Give to gladden the lives of little children, give to relieve the hardships and wants of those who are sore pressed in the struggles of life, give to bring hope and cheer and the sense of the brotherhood and love into the hearts of all within the circle of your acquaintance. Above all give of yourself to cheer and help the world of men on its way toward the attainment and realization of the peace which makes the perfect life and the good will which binds all men together in one great human brotherhood.

It is not what we get out of life but what we put into it that enlarges one's life and enables him to attain the most and the best. We shall pass this way but once, let us leave gifts that shall insure for us a blessed memory.

Anticipating Christmas Joys



CHRISTMAS cheer fills the heart

of him who tries to bring it to hearts of others. ENDEAVOR to make everyone who comes near you happy, plan to send JOY to those who have it not and you shall have a

MERRY CHRISTMAS

WHO IS CHRISTMAS FOR?

Who is Christmas for? Well, it is not for the "Old Scrooge" that Charles Dickens introduced us to so many years ago, not for that "Old Scrooge" nor any other old Scrooge or old skunk who is so stingy and mean that he won't smile unless he is paid for it in good hard cash and who dare not laugh for fear it will give him an appetite. No, Christmas can't be for the Scrooges or the skinflints, because they wouldn't know what to do with it if they had it and they don't want it any way. Christmas can't be for the fellows young or old who only think of themselves and what they can get for themselves and don't care a penny for any one else; for Christmas is good will toward every body and the fellow that persists in standing all alone with both of his hands full and his feet on what he can't hold in his hands, can't join hands in the jolly happy circle of Christmas good will. So, you see Christmas can't be for the stingy and mean and selfish. But who is Christmas for? Who wants it? The answer comes back from thousands, yes millions of boys and girls all round the world, "We want Christmas!" Some of them are rich and some of them are poor, some live in cities and some live in the country, some are living in tropical lands and some in the midst of snow and ice, some are straight and healthy while others are crippled and pale but they are all agreed that they want Christmas and that they can't get along without it and there isn't least bit of doubt in the world that Christmas is for everyone of them. The boys and girls do not have a monopoly on Christmas, not if Santa Claus knows himself, and he thinks he does. There are grandfathers and grand-

mothers, fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts and people that are none of these things, millions of them; they want Christmas, and they are neither mean nor stingy nor selfish; their hands are stretched out to join the Christmas circle of good will. Christmas is for them. To put the whole matter in a few words, Christmas is for everyone who really wants it and does not have his or her hands and mind so full of other trash that he or she cannot take it.

"I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old, familiar carols play
And wild and sweet
The words repeat

"Of peace on earth, good will to men!"
There it is, "good will to men!" It doesn't say white men or black men or red or yellow men; just men", that means all men. Of course Christmas is for everybody and if you hear of anybody that is going about complaining that Christmas is not for them, just make up your mind that the joke is on them. Christmas is for them all right but they won't take it or they can't take just because they had rather hold on to something else. If somebody should offer a boy three pieces of nice warm mince pie and that boy had a snow ball in each hand and another in his mouth and he refused to let go of the snow balls, he couldn't take the pie, could he? Not until the snow balls melted, anyway.

In order that you who read may know that all this is true and told just the way it ought to be the writer signs his official title
DEPUTY SANTA CLAUS No. 76978347.

Christmas Motive

"For unto us a child is born."

What is it all for, what is the meaning and purpose of life? Why do men and women toil and moil, strive and scheme, search and scramble, grasp and hoard? The fortune of millions amassed during long years, at the cost of happiness and health; the attainment through tireless years of planning and scheming for high position and place of power; the great industry built up and established by the expenditure of the very life blood of many willing victims; great systems of commerce, stupendous achievements in building and engineering, scientific projects and discoveries, all the mighty works wrought by human brain and brawn; in the last analysis, what is the purpose, the real and central purpose? The millions must be left at last by the man who has gathered them together; the position must be vacated and the power abdicated; builders of industries and commercial systems, of railroads, bridges and canals must at the last leave their work. There can never be but one answer to the question, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" But the great works of humanity are not for the purpose of saving the worker's soul and such a selfish purpose as this is not adequate, could hardly furnish an incentive for the works that men and women devote themselves to.

Was not the mind of the prophet filled with some such questions as these, when he foretold the future of his people and visualized for them the time when the nation had been multiplied when there was great rejoicing when the "rod of the oppressor" was broken and "unto us a child is born". In this last statement there seems to lie the answer to the question, what is the inner purpose of life?

When in the fullness of time the child, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem of Judea and Christmas had come to men it brought the revelation of a central purpose of human life and endeavor. This Child, in one sense at least, is typical of every child born unto men. If, to follow the words of Isaiah, the great prophet of Israel, the increase of beneficent government and peace, and the everlasting continuance of righteousness and justice, is to be, it must be so increased and so continued by the children who are born unto men and a supreme and ever present purpose of human life is to prepare the way for the child so train and nurture and equip him that he may be fit and able to increase beneficent conditions, put away suffering and wretchedness and misery from human lives. The more of such suffering, the more of privation and hardship that may be vanquished and put away, the more of happiness and gladness may the child in his day bring into human life.

The future of the race lies within the child; in the child lies the hope and possibility of perpetuating the good that has been accomplished and accomplishing further good. Christmas exalts the child and reveals his supreme importance.

Where shall we look for the most august the most important human figures of the world? Shall we find them on the thrones of the Kingdoms of the world, in the places of prestige and power or in the ranks of royalty or wealth? The central figures in the world 1900 years ago were a mother and her child; history has shown that the importance of the kings and princes of that day dwindled into insignificance when compared with the significance to the whole world of men, of that mother and child. The central figures in the world today are still the mother and her child; wherever they may be found, in the cottages of the poor or the homes of affluence, these are the significant and important personages.

That the world is awake to this fact, is shown by the world wide efforts to secure for every child the full measure of his rights. His right to be well born, to a peaceful, healthy, happy childhood, to a proper and efficient training for the tasks and joys of life and to the highest and noblest ideals and examples that may be set before him.

This then is the purpose Christmas brings to life; a purpose to make the world a better place for men and women to live, to increase its peace and happiness for and through the child. It is not a selfish purpose but it is a purpose sufficient as an incentive for the best and noblest work of which men and women are capable.

It is gratifying indeed to note that this purpose Christmas has brought is recognized and adopted as a purpose for the life activities of so many. There never was a time when the study of child life occupied the time and thought of so many and so intelligent a class of workers as at the present; never before a time when so careful and persistent an effort was being made to surround the children with the best possible conditions, and give to them the greatest possible opportunity for their physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development and growth.

In the glow of that light that came among men with the birth of the babe of Bethlehem there is revealed the mighty fact that humanity can only be exalted as childhood is exalted in the esteem and care of those among whom the children are and that the great and mighty works of a life can have no nobler higher purpose than to make the way clear, plain and safe for a little child.

"O holy child of Bethlehem

Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin and enter in;

Be born in us today!

We hear the Christmas angels

The great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us,

Our Lord Emanuel!"